

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

AID-05 PC-01 DEAE-00 OES-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /080 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7264

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, FJ

SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER

1. A COURTESY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER RATU MARA ARRANGED BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE FOR THE SAME DAY AS THE PRESENTATION OF THE CREDENTIALS LASTED ALMOST A HOUR AND WAS NOTABLE BY THE FACT THAT PM SHOWED HIMSELF CONSIDERABLY LESS ALOOF THAN HE IS GENERALLY DEPICTED TO BE. HE WAS RELAXED DESPITE THE FACT THAT ONLY AN HOUR BEFORE OUR MEETING HE HAD CONCLUDED A FIVE HOUR CABINET MEETING AND HAD TIME ONLY FOR A QUICK LUNCH. HE INITIATED MOST OF THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED AND WAS FORTHCOMING WITH HIS COMMENTS CONSIDERING THAT HE WAS MEETING HIS VISITOR FOR THE FIRST TIME.

2. RATU MARA BEGAN BY EXPRESSING GREAT PLEASURE FOR THE U.S. DECISION TO ACCREDIT A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO FIJI AND WELCOMED THE U.S. INTEREST IN THE AREA WHICH SUCH A DECISION, HE THOUGHT, CONVEYED. I ASSURED HIM THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE CASE AND ADDED THAT IN LINE WITH MY APPOINTMENT THE EMBASSY STAFF IS BEING EXPANDED TO ALLOW FOR A FULLER DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION. I

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MENTIONED THE ASSIGNMENT OF A PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY WOULD INCLUDE CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND RELATED PROGRAM AND THE EXPECTED ASSIGNMENT OF AN AID REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE.

3. IN VIEW OF THE BACKGROUND OF THULATTER ASSIGNMENT I MADE A LONGER STORY OF IT BY CLAIMING THAT I HAD MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT

BEFORE I LEFT WASHINGTON TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR SUCH A REGIONAL AID REPRESENTATIVE BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING LEGAL IMPEDIMENT TO ANY BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH FIJI. I EXPLAINED THAT THE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE OF HAVING AN AID REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SPOT IS THE FACT THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY TO IDEA AND SUGGESTIONS FOR PROJECTS WHICH MAY HAVE A REGIONAL IMPACT AND DIMENSION. WHEN I MENTIONED ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S DECISIVE SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA RATU REACTED QUICKLY AND PROCEEDED TO RECALL THE HAPPY COINCIDENCE OF MEETING HOLBROOKE IN THE NADI AIRPORT AT THE END OF DECEMBER AND HOW MUCH HE ENJOYED HCS CONVERSATION WITH HIM.

4. THE PM MADE IT OBVIOUS THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR OF THESE ADDITIONS TO THE EMBASSY STAFF AND PROCEEDED TO SUGGEST ONE AREA FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION BY PAO AND AID, NAMELY HYDROLOGY. HE EXPLAINED THAT WHAT HE MEANT WAS THE NEED FOR EXPERTISE IN FIJI AND OTHER ISLANDS IN THE AREA ON HOW TO CONSERVE RAIN WATER. HE FOUND IT INCONGRUOUS THAT A COUNTRY, FOR EXAMPLE, LIKE FIJI WITH ABUNDANT RAINFALL SHOULD BE FORCED TO RATION WATER EVEN AFTER A MONTH'S DROUGHT.

5. HE WELCOMED AN EXPANSION OF THE IV GRANTEE PROGRAM BECAUSE HE RECALLED VIVIDLY HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AS A LEADER GRANTEE A FEW YEARS BACK AND THE EDUCATIONAL EXPOSURE HE HAD TO THE U.S. BOTH CULTURALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY.
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7. I MENTIONED THE PEACE CORPS AND POINTEDLY ASUEENHIM FOR HIS ASSESSEMENT. WITHOUT HESITATION HE QUALIFIED THE PEACE CORPS PROGRAM AND ORDINARILY SUCCESSFUL". CALLING MY ATTENTION

TO THE FACT THAT IN TEN YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY MINOR INCIDENTS SUCH AS AN ATTEMPT TO GROW MARIJUANA "WHICH AFTER ALL HAD BEEN GROWN BEFORE IN FIJI BY THE INDIAN POPULATION." HE LEFT NO DOUBT THAT INDEED HE VALUES HIGHLY THE PC VOLUNTEERS' CONTRIBUTION. HE READILY AGREED WHEN I SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT PEACE CORPS POLICY TO RESPOND TO NEEDS AS DEFINED BY THE HOST COUNTRY AND TO EXERCISE GREAT CARE IN THE SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS COMMITTED TO THE CASE OF HELPING THE PEOPLE THAT NEED MOST HELP ACCOUNT PERHAPS FOR SOME OF THE PC SUCCESS STORY IN FIJI.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT A STUBBORN, DETERMINED MAN LIKE RATU MARA WILL EVER GIVE UP ON HIS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN AID BILATERAL AGREEMENT IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT HE DID NOT CHOOSE TO RAISE IT AT THIS TIME. THERE WAS A PSYCHOLOGICAL AD-

VANTAGE IN MENTIONING IT TO HIM AT THIS FIRST MEETING.

8. OUR PC COLLEAGUES SHOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE SUCH AN
UNQUALIFIED PRIASE BY A MAN KNOW WELL AS A HARD TEAKMASTER AND
BLUNT SPEAKER.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT SEARCH FOR A
QUALIFIED AID REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN SUVA HAS BEEN COMPLETED
WOULD APPRECIATE INFO ON HIS NAME AND ESPECIALLY ON ETA. RE-
GARDLESS OF ANY OTHER NEW IDEAS THE ATS-G PROJECT AND TITLE
12 ARE ENTERING PERIOD WHEN AID REP. IN SUVA WILL BECOME
INDISPENSABLE.
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